

Initially the 0436 Series was developed for positions in the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Program only and other agencies were not allowed to place positions in this series without the approval of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). However, since this position description (PD) describes the work transitioned from APHIS, PPQ into the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (BCBP), it may be utilized for recruitment purposes until such time new position descriptions are established for DHS, BCBP.

Introduction -

The incumbent serves as a Bureau of Customs and Border Protection Agriculture Trainee Inspector at a port and/or domestic work site with the responsibility for enforcing APHIS regulations. The inspector is under the supervision of a Supervisory Bureau of Customs and Border Protection Inspector and works with relative independence in carrying out assigned duties and responsibilities.

Duties -

The incumbent is an advanced trainee Bureau of Customs and Border Protection Agriculture Inspector. Working under the guidance of an experienced and higher graded inspector, the incumbent performs a variety of inspection, survey, technical, and quarantine duties to provide continuous on-the-job experience and knowledge leading to the journeyman level of performance.

Inspects ships, aircraft, vehicles, passengers, railway cars, mail, baggage, plants, plant products, and miscellaneous articles (following standard PPQ procedures) for restricted or prohibited agricultural commodities, animal by-products, and pests that are potentially dangerous to the nation's agriculture.

Reviews manifests, incoming PPQ forms, consular invoices, and other documents associated with the import of products, noting agricultural commodities on an inspection report based on the country of origin, type of commodity, pest risk, etc. Selects material for inspection according to established sampling plans. Using field techniques, recognizes the presence and/or symptoms of plant pests. Distinguishes between domestic and cosmopolitan pests and those that are potentially dangerous to the agricultural industry. From the results of inspections, makes decisions as to the subsequent action, such as: (1) releases non-prohibited products and materials; (2) determines the need for pre-entry treatments; and (3) refuses entry, movement, and/or seizes or safeguards prohibited, restricted, and infested materials pending final disposition.

Contacts landowners, farmers, nurserymen, warehousemen, trade representatives, brokers, etc., relative to securing permission to conduct surveys, enforce quarantine regulations, and advise on PPQ programs and regulations.

Coordinates and conducts surveys and inspections to determine the presence and density of plant pests and other environmental, physical, biological, and ecological factors that may affect the extent of damage the pests might cause.

Interprets and enforces Federal and parallel state domestic quarantines and regulatory orders restricting the shipment of plants, plant products, animal by-products, and other materials into, within, and out of the United States. Upon compliance with regulations, issues certificates or permits the movement of regulated articles. Prepares and executes compliance agreements with cooperators, catering establishments, etc. Reviews and revises cooperative agreements as conditions warrant.

Plans, conducts, and/or supervises various treatments, such as disinfection, sterilization, fumigation, etc., of plant pests. Determines and insures the proper dosage, time of exposure, temperature, and safety conditions are met to avoid damage to the products. Determines the appropriate measures to use to eradicate the pests. Decides when re-inspections of infested sites shall be made to determine the incidence or density of plant pests and the effect of control operations.

Factor Levels -

1. Knowledge Required by the Position

Professional knowledge in a combination of the biological sciences of plant pathology, entomology, nematology, botany, and related agricultural sciences to recognize various agricultural commodities, plant pests, and conditions that may have an adverse affect on agricultural production.

Knowledge of the transportation and shipping industries to establish an effective system for inspection certification and movement of agricultural products to insure compliance with regulations.

2. Supervisory Controls

The incumbent works under the supervision of a higher graded inspector who provides continuing on-the-job instructions and guidance. For new or non repetitive assignments, the supervisor outlines objectives and suggests procedures to be followed.

The incumbent adheres to instructions and performs recurring assignments independently without specific instructions and refers problem situations to the supervisor.

Work is spot checked for accuracy of facts and results, adherence to policies, and compliance with procedures and instruction. Deviations from instructions or standard methods are not made without supervisory approval.

3. Guidelines

Guidelines include agency regulations and directives and manuals on import, export, and animal by-products for the specific type of assignment made. Deviations from guidelines are referred to the supervisor.

4. Complexity

On-the-job training at the advanced trainee level involves assignments in inspections, surveys, treatments, identification, etc., that enable the trainee to progress from problems of narrow scope and complexity involving specific regulations and procedures to those requiring judgment and experience in the application of broad rules, regulations, and technical knowledge used in determining or recommending courses of action.

5. Scope and Effect

The inspector develops proficiency in techniques and methods used in inspections, treatments, surveys, and other duties (see position description); particularly as they apply to importations, arrivals, and movement of carriers and agricultural commodities that may have the potential for harboring pests injurious to the agricultural industry. This proficiency enables the inspector to expedite the clearance of commodities, carriers, etc., as well as protect the nation's agriculture.

6. Personal Contacts

Contacts are with the general public, importers, exporters, transportation and shipping company employees, state and Federal employees of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Postal Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and others involved in import, export, or movement of agricultural commodities within the United States.

7. Purpose of Contacts

The personal contacts involve the exchange of information regarding the methods, procedures, and objectives of APHIS and the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection.

8. Physical Demands

The work requires physical exertion such as: long periods of standing at passenger inspection counters or sitting for long periods to perform microscopic examinations; recurring crouching, stooping, and reaching while inspecting cargo, automobiles, vessels, or other conveyances; occasional climbing and descending ladders on vessels; long periods of walking, carrying equipment weighing up to 50 pounds; occasional handling of loaded 55 gallon drums, fumigation tarps, farm implements and equipment, gas cylinders, bags of chemicals, or other materials; long periods of driving in rural and/or metropolitan areas; occasional riding in all-terrain vehicles in rough terrain and flying in small observational aircraft; work schedules may require more than 40 hours per week.

9. Work Environment

This position requires the incumbent to pass the appropriate security clearance as a condition of employment. The work environment includes farms, railroad yards, aircraft cargo areas, and marine docks. Periods of outdoor work may be required in snow, rain, or extreme heat. Occasional periods of outdoor work may be required in remote areas with no modern comfort facilities. The work involves the use of toxic chemicals, pesticides, and fumigants. Protective clothing may be required such as hard hats, gloves, goggles, masks, or self-contained breathing apparatus.